

Frequently Asked Questions

For
Middle East Executive Training in the United States (MEET U.S.)
Business Development Training for Women 2003
(Program Applicant)

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1. What is the background of MEET U.S.?

MEET U.S. is an initiative created under the auspices of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The MEPI, announced by Secretary of State Colin Powell on December 12, 2002, gives sustained and energetic attention to economic, political and educational reform – areas of need identified in the UNDP's Arab Human Development Report. MEET U.S., modeled on the Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) and administered by the Market Access and Compliance (MAC) division at Commerce, will combine professional exchanges, training, and internships to promote entrepreneurship and expand executive and commercial relationships between the United States, North Africa and the Middle East.

2. What type of training will MEET U.S. provide?

The participants will be trained as a group throughout the four-week program. All of the training will be based on the needs of the selected group. Participants will attend an initial orientation and training session in the Washington D.C. area, it will encompass topics including business plan development, strategies, cross-cultural communication and business negotiations. The remaining portion will consist of various training opportunities at U.S. host companies and institutions throughout the United States. Training will be focused on important business subjects, such as marketing, customer service, human resource developments, sales and e-business. Participants will meet with American counterparts to discuss lessons learned and review case studies detailing the challenges facing small and medium-sized businesses. Business roundtables, meetings with local chambers, world trade associations, and participation in trade shows will be incorporated into the program.

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3. Which countries are eligible to apply?

Participants from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, in addition to Arab communities within Israel (Arab-Israelis), Gaza and the West Bank.

4. Who can apply?

Given the MEPI's attention to the needs of women in Arab society, the first group training program will be designed exclusively for female entrepreneurs. Arab businesswomen holding executive positions as owner, manager or middle manager in any sector are urged to apply.

5. Will the training be conducted in English, Arabic or French?

Although helpful, fluency in English is not required. The MEET U.S. Program will provide simultaneous interpretation into Standard Arabic and French, as needed.

6. Where do applicants send completed applications?

Candidates can submit completed applications to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate within their country. U.S. Embassy/Consulates will forward all applications to the Washington D.C. staff for review.

7. How are participants selected?

Washington staff will screen all applications. Top applicants will be notified and interviewed at the designated American Embassy. Final selection will be based on candidate's position within her company, experience, leadership ability, ability to spread new ideas inside and outside her company, and personal goals.

8. How many participants will be selected for each program?

Eighteen (18) to twenty (20) participants will be selected to participate in each group-training session. Alternates will be identified in the event a selected participant cannot participate for any other reason.

9. How many times can an applicant apply for the program?

Individuals that are not selected to participate in a MEET U.S. program may re-apply to future MEET U.S. programs.

10. What will be the average training days and hours?

During the one-week training session in Washington, the schedule will run approximately from 8:30 am-5pm and there may be evening activities planned as well. While traveling throughout the U.S., you should expect full workdays – often it will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In general, your evenings and weekends should be free, but the Program Manager may make arrangements for special activities.

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11. What about health insurance?

The U.S. Government is concerned about the health and well being of each and every participant. To assist you, we will provide medical insurance for the duration of your training. The insurance will cover medical treatment for injuries, medical emergencies and medical evacuation, if needed. This policy does not provide benefits or cover care for pre-existing conditions or dental care (except for dental injuries.) As you may know, medical care is extremely expensive in the United States. You will be responsible for an out-of-pocket, non-reimbursable deductible payment (it was \$75 last year – so it should be around that amount this year) for each appointment with a doctor, clinic, or hospital, and a co-payment for any medication you might need as a result of this visit.

12. What is the per diem allowance supposed to cover?

Participants will receive \$US34 per day for each day they are in the United States. The per diem is intended to cover modest meals and some incidental expenses such as laundering and tips. It is not meant to replace your salary or cover all of your expenses. We will give you a lump sum during your first week's orientation in Washington. We highly recommend that you purchase traveler's checks as a safeguard against theft and will arrange a time at the bank when you may do so. Traveler's checks are accepted as cash in most places and hotels will also cash them for you.

13. Who to contact?

For further questions or information, please contact the American Embassy in your country or Tanya Cheguer, Program Officer, Phone: 202-482-1860, E-mail MEETUS@ita.doc.gov.

